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THE LEADER FALLEN:

A Sermon

ON THE DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

BY JOHN M. KREBS,

Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Rutgers-street, New-York.

NEW-YORK:

1841.





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To *William Ketchum Esq.*
with the respects
of The Author

THE LEADER FALLEN:

A Sermon

PREACHED IN THE RUTGERS-STREET CHURCH, NEW-YORK, ON SABBATH

MORNING, APRIL 11TH, 1841, ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

✓
BY JOHN M. KREBS,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

"A nation's sighs,
A nation's tears went with thine obsequies."

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NEW-YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF-STREET.

1841.

New-York, April 15, 1841.

REVEREND SIR,

In behalf of many of your congregation, and without any formal organization for the proceeding, we would respectfully ask of you for publication a copy of the impressive and highly-interesting sermon you delivered on the last Sabbath morning, upon the occasion of the lamented death of our late chief magistrate.

We most heartily join with our brethren in this request, and esteem it a privilege, as well as a pleasure, to be the organ of communicating to you this expression of their gratification ; and we indulge the hope that you may find it compatible with your views and convenience to favour their wishes.

We remain, dear sir, with great consideration,

Your friends,

LATHROP L. STURGES,
GILBERT HOPKINS,
EBENEZER PLATT,
JOHN W. C. LEVERIDGE,
JAMES McCULLOUGH,
CALEB BARSTOW,
SAMUEL L. MITCHILL.
HENRY GRINNELL.
THOMPSON PRICE.
IRED HAWLEY.

REV. JOHN M. KREBS, }
Pastor of the Rutgers-street Church. }

TO MESSRS. LATHROP L. STURGES, GILBERT HOPKINS, &c.

MY RESPECTED FRIENDS ;

In consenting to your request for a copy of the annexed discourse, I felt it to be due to you to gratify the desire which, in so kind a manner, you expressed for yourselves, and have assured me is the desire of my people, to possess it in a printed form. I was also willing to offer it as an humble contribution to the very solemn occasion, which I doubted not would be improved and honoured by all my brethren.

The delay in sending you the manuscript has been caused by the necessity of writing it out entirely from the few brief and hastily-prepared notes from which it was first preached. To do this, I have been obliged to confine myself to such intervals as were allowed by many other engagements. I trust that I have succeeded in reproducing the substance of what was spoken, and that you will be able to recognise, what I have endeavoured to preserve as nearly as possible, the very language. But, notwithstanding this endeavour, I have not refrained from expanding some of the thoughts which were but rapidly touched in preaching. The result has been to make the whole somewhat longer than I ventured to make it in the pulpit, even on such a special occasion. The reader, however, will have this compensating advantage, that if, as a hearer, he were too well bred to leave the *preacher* in the midst of his discourse, he can lay down the *author* at pleasure.

I am, very truly,

Yours, &c.,

JOHN M. KREBS.

New-York, April 27th, 1841.

S E R M O N.

“Moses my servant is dead.”—*Joshua*, i., 2.

THESE are the words of God. They are not, indeed, the first announcement of the event to which they refer. Not only had it been foretold to Moses and to the people that he should not live to conduct them into the Promised Land. They knew that he had gone up into the mountain to die there, and that he had been buried by the hand of the Lord, away from their presence and from their knowledge of his grave; and now, after thirty days of weeping and mourning for him, the camp of Israel had concluded those funeral obsequies, which were suggested alike by their affection for his memory and by their respect for his official station.

They are the formal announcement of the event, or, if they may be so called, the official declaration, addressed to Joshua, “Moses’ minister” and successor, and, through him, to all the people of Israel. They are coupled with a command to Joshua, now publicly recognised as the ordained leader and chief magistrate of the chosen people, to carry forward to its completion the great enterprise which had been begun by Moses: “Moses my servant is dead; now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this peo-

ple, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel."

The death of Moses was an event of great solemnity and importance to himself, to Joshua, and to Israel.

Death is to every man a most solemn and affecting thing. To him that suffers death, it is the end of all earthly joys and plans. It is the end of his probation, of all those emotions and actions which stamp the character for eternity, and for which the great, decisive, unending destinies of the supreme tribunal are adjusted. The soul passes away from the very midst of busy care, of suffering, and of expectation, and, it may be, from the very midst of persisted, and unrepented, and unpardoned sin, to test all its hopes and fears; to confront the judgment of a holy God, and to meet its instant doom; to inherit "glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternal life;" or to inherit "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." For with whatsoever character men are found by death, and they depart into eternity, they are also found at the bar of God; and their character and their doom, accurately harmonizing, remain unaltered forever. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." "And these" (the wicked) "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

But, apart from this consideration, the death of Moses occurred at a time which, if it had been left to his selection

or to ours, would have been, of all others, perhaps, the most unlikely to be chosen.

Born in an era of persecution especially directed against the infants of the Hebrews in Egypt, he had been wonderfully preserved by the daughter of their oppressor, and was educated under her fostering care, within the very precincts of the tyrant's palace. But, though bred amid the corruptions of an idolatrous court, he escaped all its allurements. Courted by ambition, a sacred patriotism was too firmly planted in his bosom to be overcome by the temptations that assailed him; and he preferred to be a willing partaker of the afflictions of his countrymen. Learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, a sublimer science taught him to choose the service of the God of Israel, and to "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." He was a man "mighty in works and deeds." When, at forty years of age, he went forth to visit his brethren, and he looked on their burdens, seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him that was oppressed and slew the Egyptian taskmaster. For he supposed his brethren of the children of Israel would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not. The rude and perverse speech of one of his stiff-necked countrymen, with whom he expostulated for offering wrong to his neighbour, alarmed him, lest his own slaying of the Egyptian, the day before, should be known to Pharaoh; and he fled into the land of Midian, where he dwelt for forty years, amid the secluded and peaceful employments of pastoral life. At the end of that

period, having led his flock to Mount Horeb, he received a commission from the Lord speaking from the burning bush : " I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. This Moses, whom they refused (saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge ?), the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer." Moses obeyed the call, returned to Egypt, confronted Pharaoh, and led out Israel, "after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, forty years." During the time of their wanderings, he shared all the vicissitudes of their journey ; gave them counsel ; established their political institutions and religious rites ; published the law which he received from Sinai ; aided them in their wars with the nations that opposed their progress ; saved them by his intercessions from the wrath of the Lord ; and, with one fatal exception, suffered meekly their turbulence and reproaches. And when, of the generation of them that came out of Egypt, they who were twenty years old and upward were denounced, and sentenced to wander in the wilderness and to die, and he also received the sentence of death in his own body, he still manifested the same anxious solicitude for their prosperity, and to the last employed himself, with patriotic and religious zeal, in providing for the comfortable establishment of their children in the Promised Land.

The people were now encamped in the plains of Moab, in the vicinity of the mountains of Abarim, on the eastern side of the Jordan, in the inheritance that was assigned to the tribe

of Reuben. Often doubtless, during their long and painful pilgrimage, had Moses looked forward to the day when he should see the inheritance promised to the fathers, in the possession of their children, and their enjoyment of those institutions of religion and government, in the arrangement of which he himself had borne so important a part in the transactions of Sinai, where God ordained and published his laws for Israel.

But, as far as he himself was personally concerned, these high hopes were blasted. For their sin, the adult generation that came out of Egypt fell in the wilderness; and for his own sin, albeit it was provoked by their petulance and rebellion, he is not permitted to set foot in that goodly land. When Joshua was publicly ordained as his successor, submitting to the dispensation of God in his own decease, Moses entreated but for permission to go over Jordan and survey the country ere he should die. In his valedictory charges and admonitions to Israel, he recites in a most affecting manner his petition and its answer. "I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand; for what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me; and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and south-

ward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see." Fearful rebuke to Israel for their impiety and folly and insensibility to their peculiar mercies; and severe the lesson taught in the sentence pronounced even upon Moses, the servant of God; whose life is forfeited, and at such a juncture, for his solitary act of rash and intemperate forgetfulness to honour the God of Israel in the eyes of the people. Though he were eminent, useful, and godly, yet must he meet the penalty. And, humanly judging, it could hardly be severer.

For now, when they stood upon the borders of the promised land; when their perils and wandering in the wilderness were past; when they had already won a foothold in the country, and its entire conquest was pledged; when its goodness had been actually surveyed and described by trusty messengers; and when Israel was just about to enter upon its possession; at such a juncture, Moses must transfer his authority to other hands. How hard, methinks, it must have been! Grace and patience are exercised under disappointments; they do not render us insensible to pain; else were there no patience and submission. "No chastisement, for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous." Instead of being permitted to lead the people into Canaan, to take possession, and to share with them the triumph and the joy, he must bid farewell to Israel, toil up the mountain's side alone, and from its summit, cast one comprehensive, one

first and last look over the broad and beautiful expanse, and then close his eyes upon that charming scene forever.

Before him was spread out, as upon a map, the length and breadth of that land for which his heart had panted with patriot affection and pious zeal. From the high peak on which he stood, in the centre of Reuben, his eye took in the distant view from the southern border of Judah to the far limits of Naphtali and Asher; and traversing the country from the city of palm-trees and the lovely vale of Jericho to Ephraim and to Dan, it surveyed, where this extensive and beautiful panorama was only bounded beyond the wide expanse by the waves of the Mediterranean. Now looking north from Nebo across Gilead; now glancing from "the glory of Lebanon" to "the excellency of Carmel" or of "Sharon;" now resting on that "goodly mountain" where the sanctuary should stand, his eye beheld a country not, as now, extensively desolate, barren, and neglected, but stately in the grandeur of mountain, forest, and flood; it was rich and lovely in its scenery, and fertile in its soil; "a land flowing with milk and honey," and capable of sustaining a vast population. Verdant plains, and eminences crowned with woods, fat valleys, luxuriant pastures, shady groves, refreshing streams, gushing fountains, and murmuring cascades, and ample lakes, and cities and villages studing the land, everywhere diversified the face of the country.

There, spread before his very eye, was the land which was to be the glory of all lands. There his fathers had dwelt; and there Israel should dwell again. There was the object and the reward of all their toils. There God

should be honoured in the midst of his own nation, his rites observed, his worship free, his mercies distilled “as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.” There, in forms and under influences unknown to other nations, should flourish the arts of civilized life ; there “patriot truth” convey her “noble precepts” and animate to lofty heroism ; and there the sacred pledges of “religion, liberty, and law” should forever abide.

And he who surveyed this scene, while prophetic inspirations filled up the visions of the future, he was the mighty and the honoured chief of that people destined to be as the stars for multitude ; he was one of themselves ; he was raised up to be an inheritor with them of the toil and the glory together ; and to him it had been assigned to declare and execute their laws of Divine enactment ; to rule over them for their own advantage ; and to defend, preserve, and guide the destinies of that young but rising and important commonwealth—the only model of a true republic which the ancient world ever saw, for it was founded by God himself, and He gave to all the people the sacred charter of their franchises, their liberty, and their independence.

Was it in the heart of a descendant of Abraham, of a patriot, and of a good man, to look upon such a scene, and not feel at least a momentary pang at the thought that his part in it had ended forever !

His days, indeed, were already greatly prolonged. He was a hundred and twenty years old. But, although he himself had spoken of the decay of three score years and ten, and of the labour and sorrow that weaken the strength of

four score, (Psalm xc. 10) yet in his own person there were no traces of the infirmity of age. He was already four score when he assumed the command of Israel and achieved their deliverance ; and now, after forty years more of toils and dangers, " his eye was not dim, neither was his natural force abated." He was still qualified to control the public affairs ; and with Joshua associated with him in the administration, and with the Sanhedrim which he had appointed, it would seem as if, for many years to come, his hand might safely, peacefully, and honourably maintain the reins of government.

Such was the prospect. And yet, in such an hour, comes the command to relinquish all his hopes and expectations of so sublime a career. " The Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed : I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord ; and he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor ; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

But while Moses was removed from earth, he departed not unblest. His heart beat with the ardour of patriotism ; and, though not his was the continued administration of the affairs of Israel, no mean jealousies nor malignant envies agitated his breast. At his own request a successor had been appointed. Joshua, who was his companion in the conferences of Sinai, and was close in his confidence, was

selected by the Lord ; upon him the hand of Moses was laid ; upon him he put his own honour, that the children of Israel might be obedient ; he presented him to the people, and caused him to be ordained by Eleazer the priest, and gave him a public charge, with ample directions for administering the government. Afterwards, he made an address, in which he reviewed the history of Israel's deliverance, their sins and the rebukes of the Lord. Giving them injunctions respecting their future behaviour, he repeated his commendations of Joshua, and gave to him his valedictory charge. Then, blessing his countrymen, indulging his glowing fancy with the hopes and visions of their prosperity, and employing his last thoughts of earth for the welfare of his people, he burst forth in the numbers of that sublime song, which may not be excelled for poetic diction, for captivating imagery, for pathetic reminiscences, for glowing anticipations, nor for pious confidence in that covenanted God, in whose hands, in concluding, he thus left the seed of Israel : "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms : and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone : the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine ; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency ! and thine enemies shall be

found liars unto thee : and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”

And while his departing hours were thus cheered in respect to his countrymen ; while he thus triumphed in advantages and victories already gained, and in Divine pledges that ensured the completion of the great enterprise for which God raised him up ; and while he felt such deep anxiety for the rights and honour of God among that people, he was equally favoured in respect to the personal, eternal issues of his decease. He died when his work was accomplished, and not before. He “died in the faith.” He died cheered with the presence of his covenant and pardoning God. He had bade farewell to Israel, and stood alone ; but his Redeemer was with him, and spake to him and blessed him. He looked upon the goodness of the earthly Canaan, to part with its sight and its enjoyment forever ; but he looked upward also, and saw there a better country, that is, an heavenly, which he yet more desired. And God, not ashamed to be called his God, kissed away his breath, and carried him to the land which is afar off, and to the city which was prepared for him by the God who called him in Horeb ; the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, his fathers ; the God, not of the dead, but of them that are alive with Him in the heavenly Canaan.

But the death of Moses was not less solemn and interesting to the people of Israel, and to Joshua, his associate and successor.

It was the characteristic of that people to be ever too mindful of themselves, and of their mere temporal advantage.

Looking too fondly to their earthly prosperity, they were vain and boastful, while they trusted in themselves and in men, and did not trust to the superintending providence of God. Ever murmuring against Moses for leading them into difficulties, and not caring for their degradation while they longed but for the flesh-pots of Egypt, they spoke contemptuously even of the power of God, as if, in obeying him, they had but gone out into the wilderness to die: "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" Their unbelief cost them dear. Alternately rebelling and repenting, when their turbulence was rebuked, and thousands of them were smitten down, they sought the Lord; but they flattered him and lied unto him, and tempted and provoked him, until the whole of the adult generation that came out of Egypt, save Joshua and Caleb, were destroyed, not one of them being permitted to enter the promised land.

But the host that was now assembled on the east side of the Jordan, although generally acknowledged to be one of the best generations of the Jewish people, were not essentially unlike their fathers. Many of them were satisfied with the country in which they were now encamped, and they discouraged those of their brethren who were inclined to pass over Jordan. There were battles yet to be fought, and powerful enemies yet to be subdued. And now, when Moses was taken away, and they must go over and possess the land, how natural was it for them to magnify the dangers before them, while they felt as if the right arm of their strength had been cut off. They felt his value when they were punished by his death, and too little was their trust in

God while they relied on human power. Not only grieving for the death of one so worthy of their affection, they were filled with apprehension for the results of that death to themselves. No longer shall they hear that voice give command to go forward ; no more shall his venerable form appear at their head ; nor his majestic countenance, which once shone with a glory that men might not behold, be turned to still the rebellious into awe, or to assure the good ; nor those hands be ever lifted again to bless them, which, when wearied, had but to be held up by Aaron and Hur, and they prevailed to the discomfiture of Amalek. And as for Joshua, he had, indeed, been tried during the life of Moses ; the Lord, too, had ordained him for this contingency, and they themselves had approved the appointment. But though they knew the spirit of the man, his honourable principles, his true-hearted patriotism, and the valour which he had formerly shown in their cause, yet, when they were just suffering their grief and the solemn rebuke administered by the death of his predecessor from whom they had hoped so much, it was not unnatural that they should entertain some apprehension of disaster and disappointment, when he was taken away and Joshua was promoted to his place at this most critical juncture of their affairs. How could they go forward without Moses ? and how will Joshua demean himself in the day of trial, when the authority of Moses has ceased, and the supreme authority is transferred to his sole, unrestrained hand ? And will he be as Moses, and prove himself his disciple ? And will he lead the people to farther victories and success, and establish them in the land ? These were questions

which arose in many minds. Doubtless they arose even in the minds of the Canaanites, who feared to be dispossessed by the farther progress of this hitherto triumphant host. On all hands the accession of Joshua to the supreme authority could not be viewed but with deep and solemn anxiety.

But while others might be thus speculating, the occasion must have awakened a very anxious solicitude in the breast of Joshua himself. The emergency, for which he had been appointed, now existed in all its solemnity. Moses is dead. But the work must be carried on. And the voice of the Lord announces to him his position and his immediate duty. It was a post of deep responsibility. His is the office of actually leading the people into the promised land, of subduing it, and of establishing Israel in peace and honour. "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel." This was a trial of his faith, and he needed encouragement. At the very outset of his course he might be met with the difficulty, that he had no visible means of transporting his forces across the river, which at that season overflowed its banks and presented a formidable obstacle in its wide, deep, and rapid current. But he remembered the passage of the Red Sea, and the past successful encounters with a series of appalling dangers and embarrassments. And with the command and the promise of the Lord, he knew that he might be strong and of a good courage, and dismiss every fear, for he was to be sustained by the purposes and by the strength of the God of Israel. He instantly entered upon

the duties of his station ; he displayed at once the wisdom, firmness, piety, and valour which the emergency demanded, and proved his fitness for the station he occupied. The confidence reposed in him was justified. He led the people over Jordan dry-shod ; the Lord caused a great fear of Israel to precede them ; the Amorites were overcome ; Jericho was invested, taken by miracle, and destroyed ; the temporary discomfiture that rebuked the conquerors for the sin of Achan's rapacity for the spoils of victory, was repaired through the prudence and piety, and inflexible justice of Joshua ; the country was subdued and divided among the tribes ; the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, and the worship of God was regularly established ; and finally, after an administration of singular fidelity and success, leaving his country great, prosperous, and happy, and full of years, of honours, and of grace, Joshua died, and was gathered unto his fathers.

It must be already evident to you, my friends, that I have selected this interesting incident of the death of Moses out of the sacred history, as well because of the striking resemblances which it furnishes, as for the appropriate instructions which it suggests, for the very melancholy and solemn event which has deprived this nation of its illustrious and honoured chief magistrate.

In common with our fellow-citizens, we united yesterday in rendering those public honours to his memory, which seemed appropriate, under the circumstances of our actual distance, both as to time and place, from the scene of his death and interment. And it is gratifying to know that,

however earnestly and honestly men may have differed with respect to his merits as a candidate for their suffrages, yet all parties have united in their manifestations of regret for a departed patriot and honest man, and of respect for his distinguished station; while they all feel a common interest in the probable or possible consequences of this national bereavement.

There is to us, my friends, in this bereavement, a voice of Providence as clear and distinct as was that word which the Lord spake to Joshua, the son of Nun, saying, "Moses my servant is dead."

I have spoken of resemblances between these events—the death of the chief magistrate of the tribes of Israel, and the death of the chief magistrate of these United States.

Consider the juncture at which this latter event occurred. It is not only remarkable as the first instance in the history of our country of a president dying in the actual exercise of his office, but it is yet more remarkable as to the time and circumstances of his death.

After a period of great political excitement, which agitated this country from one end of it to the other, the people of the United States, with the highest enthusiasm, had elevated this illustrious man, unscathed by a most fiery ordeal, to the first post of the nation. It was not merely as a *reward* for past services. I repudiate the idea; and long may it be ere the sentiment shall generally prevail, that any office, instead of being a trust for the public benefit, is conferred as a reward for any service whatever, in any other sense than as honour and emolument are the incidental results of

the public esteem thus manifested, and are identified with the appropriate fruits of the service in which the incumbent is actually employed. Offices are not sinecures nor pensions. He was elected because the people believed that the qualities he had previously evinced in the field, in the legislative hall, in the cabinet, were just grounds of confidence for the future, and eminently fitted him for the high station to which they called him.

It is not to be denied that he was elected president in the hope that, under his administration, many of the difficulties and embarrassments under which the country labours would be removed. And, under this persuasion, he was elected almost by acclamation.

At the constitutional period he was inaugurated, and immediately entered upon the arduous duties of his office. The imposing ceremony took place at the capital of the country, under the brightest auspices. The sun shone in noontide splendour on the scene; he was surrounded by the legislators and judges of the land, and by a brilliant assemblage of spectators; he uttered, in a clear and manly voice, that was heard by every ear in that vast audience, the noble and patriotic sentiments which he announced as the principles of his administration; looking upward to heaven, he confessed his reliance, not upon that unknown God whom the piety of mere Deism acknowledges, and who is too often invoked by the public men of a Christian country, but upon the God of the Bible, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and then, with this sublime testimony of his faith in our holy religion, laying his hand upon the

pages of its revelation, he swore by that God whom it proclaimed as the Governor of the world and the Judge of nations and of men, that he would be faithful to the constitution of his country. The oath was recorded in heaven. And the satisfaction and joy of his countrymen, and their confidence in his sincerity, were represented and proclaimed in the mighty shout of congratulation that went up from the lips of the fifty thousand freemen who were witnesses of that solemn appeal.

And now before him was a career of glory. His plans for the prosperity of the country might indeed fail ; and there might be honest differences in the bosoms of the people in respect to what are some of the elements of national prosperity, or as to the appropriate means for its attainment ; and faction might assail and hinder. But, with the support of able counsellors, of a Congress between whom and himself existed mutual confidence, and of a nation whose wishes were not faintly indicated, of whose wishes he was the representative, and whose wishes and will, legitimately expressed by the legislature, he was pledged to execute ; with his sagacious mind and honest heart and firm soul ; and, above all, with his beautifully manifested trust in our God, we had reasonable grounds to believe that he would administer the government for the best interests of the republic, and that God would be with him and give him good success.

He entered upon his labours with a mind furnished with the accomplishments of elegant literature and inured to patient thought ; with a tried reputation for incorruptible integrity ; and with a body trained to hardships in the tented

field, and made healthy by the invigorating employments of agricultural life. Though verging upon three score years and ten, yet his eye was not dim, neither was his natural force abated.

But, in rebuke to a nation that trusted too much in man and too little in God, he is suddenly smitten, amid almost overwhelming labours, by disease, which lays the most vigorous men prostrate. The command went forth from Heaven, as to the patriarch upon Nebo ; and upon the very verge of his highest earthly usefulness and prosperity, within thirty days from his inauguration to be our president for four years, he is struck down from his eminent station, and his body is laid among the dead.

Did he die too soon ? No more than Moses. Neither for the nation nor for himself. He was not permitted to wait until he should have fulfilled the trust which his country had committed to him, nor to receive their verdict upon its exercise. But he fulfilled his course. He was the instrument of securing ultimately what his country required from him, and he was the imbodiment, not of a mere party's success, but of the people's success in his personal elevation. He accomplished also the work which God had appointed him to do. And, in the midst of his fame, a fame that he would not have sullied had he lived ; in the arms of a confiding country, like many a hero in the arms of victory ; ere yet the discontents of the unreasonable, or the ravings of mere faction, or, it might be, the mortification of unsucccess, had time to grieve his patriotic heart, he sinks away ; and in his death he overcomes even the lingering hostility of par-

tisan opposition, that, living, felt itself at liberty to hinder his elevation; and now—a nation assembles to weep at his lamented tomb.

No; he died not too soon for himself. After such a career of usefulness, of prosperity, and of honour; after assisting to launch the vessel of state under its new officers, and to send it forth upon its new voyage; with no bitter regrets, and with a truer spirit of resignation than that which has been ascribed to the disgraced favourite* of the English tyrant,

“He gave his honours to the world again,
His better part to Heaven, and sleeps in peace.”

We have had cheering and cumulative testimony of his reverence of the Christian religion; of his habit, at least in later years, of searching the Scriptures, of meditation and of prayer; of his veneration for the Sabbath; of his attendance upon public worship; of his care to make the Bible a conspicuous part of the furniture of the presidential residence;† of his desire to be in the communion of the Christian Church, a desire perhaps too fastidiously postponed, lest his motives might be impugned; and of all the influences of a pious mother’s training and example.

We heard his singular and impressive acknowledgment of the religion and authority of the Gospel when he was inaugurated. And we have the testimony of a respected min-

* Wolsey.

† This fact has come to the knowledge of the author since this sermon was preached; but it is thought to be appropriate to incorporate it in this memorial.

ister of the Episcopal Church who was with him in his last hours, that he died in the Christian's faith. But he has gone to the judgment of his God; and we leave him with Him who searcheth the hearts, while we rejoice that men in high stations can feel their dependance upon His throne, and that our lamented chief was not only not ashamed to avow, but afforded so cheering evidences that he reposed on the grace of the crucified Saviour.

Nor can we forget to revere the memory of one who, when sinking into death, when the strong mind failed, and the thoughts ran on unrestrained by the will, showed the patriotic emotions of his heart, and the love of country strong in death. For as Moses, at his departure, "gave Joshua, the son of Nun, a charge, and said. Be strong and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel which I [the Lord] sware unto them; and I will be with thee;" so, it is said, that this venerable patriot, when just about to yield up his spirit, imagining himself to be attended by his constitutional successor, the then vice-president, he thus addressed him: "SIR, I WISH YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUE PRINCIPLES OF THE GOVERNMENT. I WISH THEM CARRIED OUT. I ASK NO MORE." Let these words be engraven on his tomb. Let them be registered among the choice sayings of our worthiest statesmen. Let them be remembered and followed by the rulers of the land.

To his country and to his successor, the announcement of this death, with these dying injunctions, is full of solemn and anxious interest.

By the peculiar structure of our government, and the ar-

rangements under which his successor was elected, that successor enters without delay or obstruction upon his high duties. He is supposed to entertain the same general views of public policy which were held by President Harrison. Indeed, he was elected because his character and sentiments were well known; and he was called by the same vote that elected his predecessor, and for the same purpose, that, in the contingency which has occurred, the will of the country might still be carried into effect. But, although no general change is to be apprehended, often the more to be dreaded on account of the confusion and revolution incidental to a change of rulers and of public policy in a government like ours, yet it is not to be concealed that, mingled with the solemn feelings produced with this event, speculation is already rife, and a very deep anxiety pervades the public mind, in relation to the particular lines and details of the policy, and of the probable influence upon the public prosperity, of the course that may be pursued by the present chief magistrate of the nation.*

But as Moses died, and neither did Israel suffer, nor Joshua prove himself unworthy nor incompetent to be their leader, such, we trust, may be the results in our case. Do we not know the man whom we elected for this conjuncture? Are his principles to be investigated and discovered at this late day? Is not his public career known? Has he not hitherto sufficiently evinced his wisdom, his integrity, his firmness, and his conscientious self-denial for the sake of

* When this was preached, the proclamation of President Tyler had not yet reached this city.

principle ? And although these are all better grounds of confidence than any specific pledges manufactured for the occasion, there have been no faint nor unintelligible intimations uttered during the previous canvassing, which satisfied the people that they were as safe as men can be when they must trust in men ; that the late and the present president were equally worthy of their confidence ; and that they were equally ready to justify the reasonable expectations which had been formed of the discretion, republicanism, and integrity of the new administration, and of the leading characteristics of their policy. Divided and rebuked as were the Israelites while Moses was alive, they were all united under Joshua. Though a part preferred the eastern shores of the Jordan for their inheritance, yet went they all together to possess the country that was promised beyond the river ; and the generation that entered and subdued Canaan were singularly prosperous and singularly united in their attachment to each other, and to their religious and political institutions. “ And the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, that they might know, that as He was with Moses, so would He be with Joshua ; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.” And may it not be that, under the influence of this solemn rebuke of Divine Providence, an influence already so great in moderating the asperity of party strife, and in bringing our people together as brothers to lament their common loss, the nation may humble itself before the throne of Heaven and confess its common transgressions ; may acknowledge that there is a God that judgeth in the earth ; may learn the evil and sinful nature of

mere faction. And now that those who were the prominent occasions of their mutual hostility are removed out of their way, and one of them is buried out of their sight, they may mingle—would that they were resolved to mingle—as patriots and as Christians, as men humbling themselves to walk with God and to fear his name, and as men to whom is given “ONE COUNTRY, ONE CONSTITUTION, AND ONE DESTINY!” Uniting, not against each other, but with each other; not as contending parties, but as countrymen and brethren; uniting, to make it the interest of those who administer the government to administer public affairs only for the public good, and to honour the God of our fathers; uniting, to elevate to office and to sustain in office only such men as shall be wise, and honest, and good, a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well. Happy for our country exalted in righteousness; happy for our public men to rule over a united, patriotic, and affectionate people;

“To scatter plenty o’er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation’s eyes.”

“Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.”

I speak all these things to-day without fear of being misinterpreted. I speak, indeed, to a congregation which, respectively preferring different candidates for their suffrages, is composed both of those who voted against, and of those who voted for the illustrious citizen, whose death, as our ruler, we mourn as a common loss. I speak to a congregation which has ever desired me to utter the sentiments of

my heart ; which, without the mean jealousy too often felt, has ever desired that here, without descending into the arena of mere party strife or to mere party advocacy, the pulpit should speak out its great salutary principles ; which has ever approved, when exercising the rights of a freeman and the duties of a minister of religion, I choose anywhere and everywhere to speak or to act for what I deem to be the true welfare of my country. Yea, I need not to-day this semblance of an apology. We stand to-day by the sepulchre. In it are buried the remains of opposition. A generous people wars not with the dead. In such an hour, too, partisans feel that they are brethren, while they mourn as for a father. And in this tribute, I do but respond to and express the feelings which your own hearts have borne hither to-day.

And while it seemed proper to take this notice of a great public bereavement, it may be that, from the analogies that have often suggested themselves to my mind and to yours, as we have meditated together on the passage of Scripture history on which this discourse is founded, we may not unaptly derive instruction as to our interests, and hopes, and duties.

See how absolutely all human affairs are under the control of God.

“ He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth : and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ? ” Such was the confession extorted by experience from the heart of a proud heathen king. Manifold are the instruments of Je-

hovah's will. All moral causes and all physical causes execute his pleasure, whether it be for the prosperity or the adversity of men and of nations. "He watereth the hills from his chambers, and he causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man." And again "He turneth a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." "Fire, and hail, and stormy vapour fulfil his word." "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught ; he maketh the devices of the people of none effect." "By him kings reign, and princes decree justice." "He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them ; he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man."

Death is an agent of the Almighty ; and it is employed to go forth among men, that he may make known among them the sovereignty of God. And he approaches often to execute the Divine will in a form and in an hour that men think not of. Men lay their plans as if they would certainly succeed ; and their success, too, is in a great measure dependant upon their living to execute them. They perplex themselves with abundant cares and various enterprises ; but they think that in a little while they shall easily conduct

them, and they shall have arranged all things to their satisfaction, and they shall have leisure and enjoyment. Tell them that they may be disappointed. Tell them that death is coming on, they know not how soon, and that they ought to set their houses in order, and to prepare also for the judgment. But they reply, or they virtually reply by their busy devotion to earthly concerns, "We cannot now disentangle ourselves, and we must prosecute these plans to the end. Neither *can* we die until such and such projects are accomplished; if we were to be called away now, everything would be left in confusion—everything would go to ruin." Their lives are indeed important, both to themselves and to their connexions. But whether men will or will not number their days to apply their hearts unto wisdom, their "days are determined; the number of their months is with God; he has appointed their bounds that they cannot pass;" and no matter how important their affairs, or necessary their lives to make their provision for earth and for eternity, death shall come at the appointed hour, the unexpected hour, the frustrating and the blighting hour; and neither unpreparedness, nor business, nor tender relations, nor official eminence, nor even national cares and duties on which the safety of an empire depends, can exempt man from the untimely stroke.

Moses was the servant of God, in high honour, and faithful to his trust. The eyes of all Israel looked upon him, and the hearts of all Israel anxiously depended upon his guidance. But though they might say he could illy be spared, God said unto him, "Get thee up into this mountain and die." He is not tied to instruments.

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Death is an agent of the Almighty not sufficiently accounted of. We look at many other contingencies, but we do not look at this one. The great anxiety of the friends of the late president was to elect him. It was defeat they dreaded—and not his death. And when they had succeeded, and saw him invested with that power which he was to wield for the extrication of the country, and to advance its prosperity, who dreamed of the sudden nearness of his death? “There are many devices in men’s hearts; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.” Jealous of the corrupting influence of power, they proposed measures to prevent their favourite from being ambitious. He should not be tempted to selfishness; nor should he fall a prey to sycophants, and flatterers, and partisan spoilers. They would guard him and make him the patriot president of the whole people. They would limit him to one term of four years. But God had fixed upon a briefer limit. Within thirty days He stepped forth from his place, and settled the question as to this man’s continued integrity. And an agency which kings and presidents cannot resist, strikes down from his lofty seat the envied possessor of power, and renders forever impossible his becoming a tyrant and a despot.

“Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the judge; he putteth down one and setteth up another.” Here is the hand of God. Who cannot see it? The people made themselves one ruler, and proud were they of their power. But God has given them another ere yet the shout of congratulation ceased to echo through the land.

And now, are we not rebuked by the voice of the Lord?

We have trusted in an arm of flesh; we are yet trusting in an arm of flesh. Our rebuke is for a sin like that of Judah. "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits; of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen." If I mistake not, here is one great and characteristic fault of the American people. Endowed with so vast an inheritance, and with such vast franchises, we are naturally jealous of our rights, and our love of freedom degenerates into the abuse of it. While vigilantly guarding our immunities, we trespass upon the rights of God. Bent on national prosperity, we mistake its elements and forget the arm on which it depends. We have cast off fear and restrained prayer. Oh! how little dependance has there been on God. And even now, when the rebuke is upon us, we are still looking to men, and felicitating ourselves, not so much with acknowledgments for the mercy, or with prayer for its continuance, that we have such a constitution, and such a ruler in the stead of him that has been taken away; and we are still pleasing ourselves with the fond expectations which we have hitherto cherished, and still our dependance is upon men! But one is gone, and another may disappoint us or may be taken away. Our leaders may be powerful in our own sight. But they have no power without God; and they have none against Him. They may be very important in our estimation; but they may not be so in His. He can carry on his purposes without them. Yea, he may turn their counsels into foolishness, and through their folly or ambition, He may

vex us in His hot displeasure. Through them he can scourge us with factious strifes, with party spoliations, with wasteful extravagance, with wars and defeats, with general corruptions and wide-spread desolations. And might He not thus contend with us? "Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward" [they are alienated]. Thus degenerated Israel. And have we preserved the virtue and the piety of our fathers? How remarkable and how kind has been the Providence of God towards this land. Before us the heathen have been cast out. We have triumphed in war. Our name is great in the earth. Our territory is vast; our population rapidly multiplying; our riches are increased; our institutions are our own boast and the admiration of mankind. But did we get them by our own might? Is their tenure in the breath of men? Are we independent of God? Was Israel independent of Him? Her sceptre is gone; and her land has been trodden down by the oppressor for thousands of years. And is America more necessary or dearer to Him than was Israel? "The nation and kingdom that will not serve him shall utterly perish." "What is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Thus saith

the Lord God, As the vine-tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will set my face against them; and they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the Lord when I set my face against them."

Or is the mere stability of our country and its institutions, even if they could survive amid the decay of virtue and piety, the last and best blessing that we need from his throne? It was much to be a dweller in the goodly heritages of Canaan. But it was far more to be a "fellow-citizen with the saints and of the household of God." And it is ruin, to be an "alien from the commonwealth of God's spiritual Israel and a stranger from the covenants of promise." Our civil and political advantages and our temporal blessings are not the end; they are but the means of higher blessings; and even they can be secured to us only by the arm and the favour of the covenanted Jehovah, "THE LORD OUR GOD." The Jews boasted of their free descent from Abraham, while they were the tributaries of Rome and the slaves of their own lusts. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." We are rich, and wise, and prosperous, and free, only as we possess the glorious liberty of the children of God; only as we become reconciled unto Him, and we serve Him with our whole heart; only as we become the heirs of His grace through Jesus Christ.

And now, shall we not hear the rod and Him that appointed it? Shall we not return unto the Lord our God, who have been rebuked for our iniquity? Shall we not take

with us words, and turn unto the Lord ; and say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously : so will we render the calves of our lips. Assur shall not save us : we will not ride upon horses ; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods : for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

“ I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely : for mine anger is turned away from him.”

But His rebukes are tempered with mercies.

“ Death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces.” The voice of God to us is, “ My servant is dead.” And He means that we shall listen to His voice, and learn wisdom, and obey His kind advice. The princes die, and shall not the living lay it to heart ? “ Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ; in that very day his thoughts perish.” “ Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein is he to be accounted of ? ” We may be thankful that, in carrying on His designs, He can raise up and qualify men to fill the places of those that are taken away ; that when a Moses dies, a Joshua is already ordained to accede to the vacant magistracy. It is an earnest of good. It is mercy mingled with judgment. He has not requited us according to our transgressions. He has not yet profaned our princes, nor given us over to a curse, nor His nation to reproaches. Let His goodness lead us to humble repentance. Let us pray for our rulers, that God would preserve their integrity, bless their plans, and keep them alive for us, and that we may

lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Let us obey His voice, for "thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Let our rulers be admonished of their responsibility to God.

Government is an ordinance of *Divine appointment*. The notion of a *social compact*, formed in some unknown age and undiscovered country, to be the basis of all civil authority, is but the baseless fabric of visionaries, and is adapted, at best, to round the periods of political declamation. No historian has registered its birth. No man can "declare its generation." There are no witnesses of this talisman's potent influence. "The powers that be are ordained of God." However absurd the abuse of this scripture doctrine, when it is perverted to sanction tyranny, and to invest with awful and mysterious terrors "the Divine right of kings" to oppress their subjects, this doctrine itself is the only theory which explains to us the secret of the law's authority, and the majesty of its influence over the public conscience. I am speaking of *government*, not of its forms, nor of kings nor presidents. But the abuse of the doctrine has been gradually giving way before the light of Divine truth, the advancing intelligence of the age, and the progress of human liberty and the assertion of the sacred rights of man.

It is understood, in our own country at least, that government is instituted, not for the sake of its incumbents, but for the sake of the commonwealth. And, under our constitutions, the rulers of the country owe their personal elevation to authority, to the favour and confidence of the people, to whom they are directly responsible. Hence it occurs that men in power “study to show themselves approved unto”—their constituents. Upon their success here, depend their continuance in elective offices, and much of their enjoyment when they shall have retired with honour from their public functions. With many, it is to be feared, this is their *greatest concern*, that they may give to the people from whom their trust was derived, such an account as will obtain their favourable verdict.

But see here what the Providence of God teaches, by his taking away our president at such a time. He waited not upon him, nor suffered him to wait until he might render to the people, after four years, an account of his public trust. He took him away from the very threshold of his authority, to render his account at a higher bar than that of public opinion. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Think, then, of this momentous fact. For all our personal conduct in private life ; for all our deportment in our domestic and social relations ; for our fidelity, also, in our exercise of public authority ; for each, and for all, we must give account to God. Think of this, ye living men ; think of it, ye that are in official stations ; think of it, ye that sit upon the high places of the earth. It is much to gain the suf-

frages of your fellow-men. No man ought to be indifferent to the good opinion of the good and of the wise ; and who can but admire him

“ Who sinks to rest,
With all his country’s wishes blest ! ”

But it is more than all the universe to obtain the approving verdict of God, when He shall say, “ Well done, thou good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

It does not follow, because men are great and famous in the earth, or because their fellow-men admire and approve them, that they have no need of the pardon of sin, and no need of the favour of God ; nor does it follow that they are certain of His approbation and eternal joy, when He shall judge the secrets of all hearts.

You must stand at His bar. The small and the great must stand there, to be judged for all the deeds done in the body. And what shall be their doom that have not made their peace with God, through the blood of the Lamb ? Whither shall they—even the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman and every freeman—whither shall they, that made not Christ their Advocate with God—whither shall they flee to hide themselves from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb ?

“ Be wise *now*, therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice

with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

See here the transitory and uncertain tenure by which men hold the joys and honours of this world.

Set not your affection on the things that are in the earth. The things which are seen are temporal. They fall from our nerveless grasp; they fade before our vision; they fly away; or we ourselves are hurried away from them.

Come hither and learn a lesson from Death.

Behold this picture. On the mountain-tops and in the valleys, in the cities and in the fields, there is a gathering of the people. In all parts of the land they assemble with mighty enthusiasm. See upon their faces the flush of high excitement; listen to the tongue of the eloquent orator; hear the resolves in which they loudly proclaim their indomitable purpose. They intend to call from his peaceful abode, yonder Cincinnatus, approved in arms, approved in statesmanship, approved in integrity. And see, they have succeeded against all opposition. They have placed him, not upon a kingly throne, but upon a seat that is higher than the highest throne on earth—the chosen ruler of a free people—enshrined in the hearts of a nation of freemen. Myriads surround him to swell the imposing pomp of that high inauguration, where he stands among them, proudly eminent with native and official dignities.

But now let one little moon have barely time to wax and wane. The gates of that princely mansion, which so lately opened to receive him, who went thither in his state, as the

representative of the people's sovereignty, are again opened amid silence and gloom. From the portal issues a mournful procession. It is lengthened out by the continual increase of the multitudes that gather there again. Silent, awe-struck, amazed—so sudden and so unexpected was the summons—they move with slow and solemn step. The only sound that falls upon the ear of that deep silence, in measured intervals, is the sound from a funeral gun. They have reached a tomb. And there, among the dead, they have laid that patriot descendant of a line illustrious in the archives and contests of freedom—that warrior, scholar, statesman, ruler—to lie in the dust of the earth!

And shall men, frail and dying men, in spite of such affecting lessons, still dwell so fondly on the things that perish, while they neglect the things that are unseen and eternal. Oh! remember that you must die. You love to forget it. You postpone the needful preparation. But soon, ah soon, approaching death will stand before you. Suddenly he may come. He may surprise you in the midst of your pleasures and sins. And when he comes, he will show no pity, he makes no difference in his prey. Not only the hoary head is rapidly and rudely levelled in the dust by him, but he lays his hand also upon the cheek of youth and beauty; and while yet the bloom of health and the smile of hope are dancing in defiance there, they fade and wither at the touch of his breath.

Repent, then; repent timely; repent now. Live unto God. Go unto him through Christ the Mediator. Greater shall be your riches, joys, and honours, than if you inherit-

ed the earth. Jesus is our Joshua to lead to the higher Canaan. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He will be nigh thee in the swellings of Jordan. He shall lead thee to victory over death. He will establish thee in the "inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for them that are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.







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